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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/501,099	11/30/2004	Donald H. Warner	TRM TR010040	5611
33047 7590 04/02/2008 GROSSMAN, TUCKER, PERREAULT & PFLEGER, PLLC 55 SOUTH COMMERICAL STREET MANCHESTER, NH 03101				
EXAMINER				
FONSECA, JESSIE T				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3633				
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04/02/2008		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/501,099

Applicant(s)

WARNER, DONALD H.

Examiner

JESSIE FONSECA

Art Unit

3633

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 July 2004.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 July 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-893)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/14/05 and 11/30/04
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

The drawings are objected to because reference numerals 32 (fig. 4), 34 (fig. 4), and 72 (fig. 5) should be underlined to indicate that particular part of the invention in which the numeral is situated is being specified. Furthermore, fig. 5 includes stray lines that should be removed to avoid confusion

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-2 and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Gill (US 5,896,717).

With regards to claim 1: Gill discloses a joint (fig. 4) capable of use with a trim panel comprising:

a first outer cover (E) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (A) formed therein (fig. 4);

a second outer cover (F) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (B) formed therein (fig. 4);

a connector platform having a first connector portion (CC) and a second connector portion (D), the first connector portion (CC) connected to the first outer cover connector portion (A) and the second connector portion (D) connected to the second outer cover connector portion (F) (fig. 4).

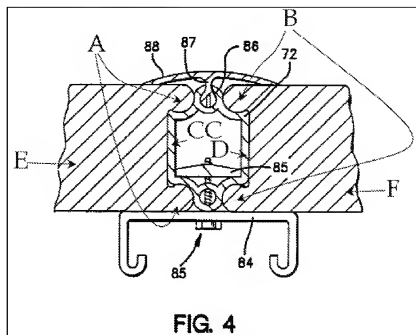


Fig. 4: Gill (US 5,896,717)

With regards to claim 2: Gill further discloses a joint cover (88) overlying the connector platform, the joint cover (88) covering the connection between the connector platform first connector portion (CC) and the first outer cover connector portion (A) and the joint cover (88) covering the connection between the connector platform second connector portion (D) and the second outer cover connector portion (B) (fig. 4).

With regards to claim 13: Gill discloses a method of forming joint (fig. 4) for a panel comprising:

providing a first outer cover (E) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (A) formed therein (fig. 4);

providing a second outer cover (F) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (B) formed therein (fig. 4);

connecting the first connector portion (CC) to the first outer cover connector portion (A) and connecting the second connector portion (D) to the second outer cover connector portion (F) (fig. 4)

With regards to claim 14: Gill further discloses providing a joint cover (88) overlying the connector platform, the joint cover (88) covers the connection between the connector platform first connector portion (CC) and the first outer cover connector portion (A) and the joint cover (88) covers the connection between the connector platform second connector portion (D) and the second outer cover connector portion (B) (fig. 4).

Claims 1-4 and 13-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ravotti et al. (US 4,719,731).

With regards to claim 1: Ravotti et al. discloses a joint (fig. 1) capable of use with a trim panel comprising:

a first outer cover (2) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (5) formed therein (fig. 1);

a second outer cover (2) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (5) formed therein (fig. 1);

a connector platform (C) having a first connector portion (arms, 30) and a second connector portion (arms, 30) (figs. 1 & 2), the first connector portion (arms, 30) connected to the first outer cover connector portion (5) and the second connector

portion (arms, 30) connected to the second outer cover connector portion (5) (figs 1 & 2).

With regard to claim 2: Ravotti et al. further discloses the side walls (7) include attachment means for a cover (C, cover disposed on side of panel) (col. 3, lines 4-12). The cover (C) attached to sidewalls (7) will serve as joint cover as it overlies the connector platform (cover located on opposite side of panel). Therefore the cover would cover the connection between the connector platform first connector portion and the first cover connector portion and the joint cover covering the connection between the connector platform second connector portion and the second outer cover connector portion (fig. 2).

With regards to claim 3: Ravotti et al. discloses joint (fig. 1) for a panel comprising:

a first and second outer covers (2) having an inner surface, an outer surface, a joint line edge and connector portion (5) formed, therein, the connector portion (5) comprising a plurality of receptacles (9) disposed along the first and second outer cover joint line edge, the receptacles (9) comprising through holes (figs. 1 & 2);

a connector platform (C) having a first connector portion and a second connector portion, the first connector portion comprising a plenty of protrusions (30) and the second connector portion comprising a plurality of protrusions (30) (figs. 1 & 2);

wherein the protrusions (30) of the first and second connector portion of the connector platform extend into the receptacles (9) of the first and second outer cover to

form a connection between the connector platform (C) first connector portion and the first outer cover connector portion (figs. 1 and 2); and

With regards to claim 4: Ravotti et al. further discloses the side walls (7) include attachment means for a cover (C, cover disposed on side of panel) (col. 3, lines 4-12). The cover (C) attached to sidewalls (7) will serve as joint cover as it overlies the connector platform (cover located on opposite side of panel). Therefore the cover would cover the connection between the connector platform first connector portion and the first cover connector portion and the joint cover covering the connection between the connector platform second connector portion and the second outer cover connector portion (fig. 2).

With regards to claim 13: Ravotti et al. discloses a joint (fig. 1) capable of use with a trim panel comprising:

providing a first outer cover (2) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (5) formed therein (fig. 1);

providing a second outer cover (2) having an inner surface, an outer surface and a connector portion (5) formed therein (fig. 1);

providing a connector platform (C) having a first connector portion (arms, 30) and a second connector portion (arms, 30) (figs. 1 & 2), the first connector portion (arms, 30) connected to the first outer cover connector portion (5) and the second connector portion (arms, 30) connected to the second outer cover connector portion (5) (figs 1 & 2).

With regard to claim 14: Ravotti et al. further discloses the side walls (7) include attachment means for a cover (C, cover disposed on side of panel) (col. 3, lines 4-12). The cover (C) attached to sidewalls (7) will serve as joint cover as it overlies the connector platform (cover located on opposite side of panel). Therefore the cover would cover the connection between the connector platform first connector portion and the first cover connector portion and the joint cover covering the connection between the connector platform second connector portion and the second outer cover connector portion (fig. 2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muirie et al. (GB 2 061 350 A).

With regards to claim 5: Muirie et al. discloses a panel comprising:

- a first outer cover (5) (fig. 1),
- a second outer cover (5) (fig. 1);
- a connector platform (1);

a joint comprising the first outer cover (5) and the second outer cover connected to the connector platform (1) (fig. 1);

a substrate (16) held in spaced relationship (30) to the first outer cover (5) and the second outer cover (5) (fig. 1),

Muirie et al. discloses the spaced relationship comprises an insulation slab (30). One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would recognize upon reading the disclosure of Muirie et al. that an insulation slab is typically known in the art as rigid foam insulation panel, such as polystyrene.

With regards to claim 6: Muirie et al. further discloses a joint cover (14) overlying the connector platform (1) (fig. 1)

With regards to claim 7: Muirie et al. further disclose the joint cover (14) overlying the connector platform (1) includes covering the connection between the first outer cover (5) and the connector platform (1) and the connection between the second outer cover (5) and the connector platform (fig. 1).

With regards to claim 8: Muirie et al. discloses a panel comprising:

- a first outer cover (5) (fig. 1),
- a second outer cover (5) (fig. 1);
- a connector platform (1);
- a joint comprising the first outer cover (5) and the second outer cover connected to the connector platform (1) (fig. 1);
- a substrate (30, insulation slab) formed directly behind the first outer cover (5) and the second outer cover (5) (fig. 1)

One of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would recognize upon reading the disclosure of Murie et al. that an insulation slab, such as Muirie et al., is typically known in the art as rigid foam insulation panel, such as polyurethane.

With regards to claim 9: Muirie et al. further discloses a joint cover (14) overlying the connector platform (1) (fig. 1).

With regards to claim 10: Muirie et al. further disclose the joint cover (14) overlying the connector platform (1) includes covering the connection between the first outer cover (5) and the connector platform (1) and the connection between the second outer cover (5) and the connector platform (fig. 1).

With regards to claim 11: Muirie et al. discloses everything previously mentioned, but fails to disclose the substrate (30, insulation slab) is reinforced with fibers. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that fibers can be added to the composition of Muirie et al. so to provide the properties of increased reinforcement to the substrate. The use of fibers to reinforce a composition is well known in the art, therefore adding fibers to the substrate of Muirie et al. would yield no unpredictable results.

With regards to claim 12: As mentioned above, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would recognize upon reading the disclosure of Murie et al. that an insulation slab, such as Muirie et al., is typically known in the art as rigid foam insulation panel, such as polyurethane.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The following prior art is directed to joints:

Jager (US 646,495); Mulford (US 841,998); Raidel (US 3,066,773); Grittner et al. (US 4,122,583); Howorth (US 4,577,448); and Knox et al. (US 5,901,977); Zander US 3,274,747), Ogawa (US 4,209, 934), Pressell (US 4,464,131) Atwell (US 5,100,356).

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JESSIE FONSECA whose telephone number is (571)272-7195. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Canfield can be reached on (571)272-6840. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3600

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/J. F./

Examiner, Art Unit 3633

/Robert J Canfield/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3635